

EXPLANATION  
FROM THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE  
CHURCH

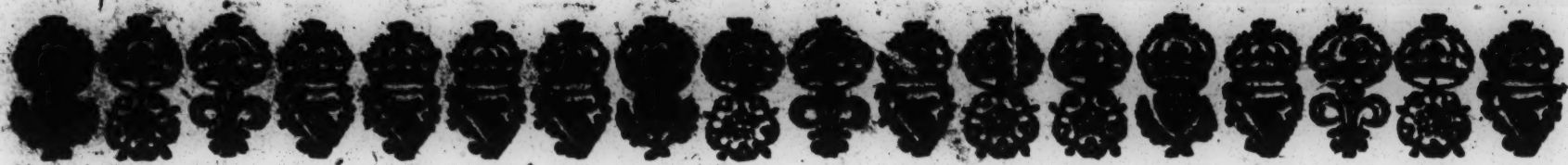
OF  
SCOTLAND,

To their BRETHREN in  
ENGLAND.



Printed by EDWARD TAYLER, Printer to the  
His most Excellent Majesty, 1649.





Edinburgh 6. Aug. 1649.

*A Brotherly Exhortation from the General  
Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to  
their Brethren in England.*

**T**He many and great obligations which we are under in re-  
ference to our Brethren in *England*, who are for their  
integrity, and adhere to the Solemn League and Cove-  
nant, together with the desire which we have to testifie our  
Sympathie with them in their afflictions, and to preserve so  
far as in us lieth that fellowship and correspondence that hath  
been entertained betwixt the Church of *Scotland* and *England*  
these years past, do call upon us and constrain us not to be si-  
lent in this day of their trouble and distrefs.

Albeit the Lord (who hath his fire in *Zion*, and his furnace  
in *Jerusalem*) hath now for a long time past, afflicted these  
Kingdoms with many and sharp rods, and that his wrath seems  
not yet to be turned away, but his hand stretched out still; yet  
in this, it becomes us who live in these Lands to stop our  
mouths, neither can any impute iniquity to the most High.

It is rather a wonder, that any mercy should be continued,  
and that *England* and *Scotland* are not cut off from being Nati-  
ons, seeing the back-slidings and provocations of both has  
been so many and so gross; Although the Solemn League and  
Covenant was sworn and subscribed by both, yet have ma-  
ny in both despised the Oath of G O D, as appears by the  
late unlawfull Engagement against the Kingdom of *England*,  
contrived and carried on by a prevailling party of Malignants  
in



in this Land, and by the proceedings of the Sectaries in *England*, in reference to Religion and Government.

We shall not insist upon what hath been the condition and carriage of the Lords People in this Land in reference to the late unlaughable Engagement: As we desire to magnifie the power and kindnesse of the Lord, who enabled all the Judicatures of his Church, and a considerable part of the Parliament, the body of the Land, to dissent from, and bear Testimony against the same, which made the House of Commons in their Letter directed to the last General Assembly or their Commissioners, to declare, that that Engagement could not be looked on as a National breach; So we look upon it as a wonder of his Wisdom and Mercy, that he hath disposed and directed the same for the furtherance of his Work in our hand, and purging his House amongst us. All this cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in Counsell, and Excellent in Working. Neither was it the least part of the Lords goodnesse to us, in that day of our strait that we were led in a plain path, and kept from compliance with Sectaries on the one hand, no less then with Malignants on the other. We have obtained this mercy to be steadfast to our old principles, in bearing true and faithfull Testimony against their proceedings, both in reference to Religion and Government, and the taking away of the Kings life.

And as the danger and judgement which threatens the Authors and Abettors of these things, doth affect our Spirits with horror, and maketh us desire that it may be given to them of God to repent: So we should conceive our selves void of Christian affection and compassion toward those in *England*, who suffer for the truth and Cause of God, if we were not very sensible of all their present troubles and calamities. It is no small grief to us, that the Gospel and Government of *Iesus Christ* are so despised in that Land, that faithfull Preachers are persecuted and cryed down, that Toleration is established



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by pretext of Law, and maintained by Military force, and that the Covenant is abolished and buried in oblivion, which proceedings, cannot but be looked upon as directly contrary to the Oath of God lying upon us, and therefore cannot eschew his Wrath when he shall come in Judgement, to be a swift witnesse against those who have so falsely used his Name.

These things are the more grievous to us, because (beside many other wofull evils brought forth by these things) we have interrupted the building of the Lords House in Jerusalem; the foundation whereof was laid by Oath and Covenant with the most High God, and followed for some years with many Devotions and Protestations of Faithfull adhering thereto, and with great expence of blood and Treasure: Which things were to all the godly in these Nations a branch of hope, that the Lord would bring to perfection the Work of Uniformity (so far advanced in all the parts thereof) in these three Kingdoms.

But the great obstructions and sad interruptions that have been made therein, by the strange and unexpected practises of men now in place and power in England, are to all the well affected in both Kingdoms, and in all the Churches abroad, the matter of their sorrow and humiliation. And if there be any place left for admonition, we Warn such as have forgotten the Covenant, and despised the Oath of God, and turned aside to their own will, to consider whence they are fallen, and to repent. Prosperity and success for a time are no warrantable evidence of a good state, nor sufficient guards against the wrath of God. It is no good use of the Lords mercy for such to take pretext of Liberty, to make both themselves and the Church more corrupt, & to make all men both in Church and State, like the fishes of the Sea, or the creeping things that creep over them. Are these things according to the pattern of the best Reformed Churches? We therefore do earnestly endeavour to bring the three Kingdoms



to the nearest uniformity that may be in *England* Government, and Discipline; Or is that the union betwixt the three Kingdomes, where the bond thereof is utterly dissolved and quite taken away from the fundamentall Government by King and Parliament. The just God who is of pure eyes beholding all things shall with no lesse fury and indignation break the horn of the men, then he hath broken the power and brought down the strength of Malignants before them, if repentance prevent.

Amidst those fears and griefes, it is unto us matter of rejoicing, that there be many in *England* who mourn for all these abominations, and labour to keep their garments pure by refusing to comply with that course of backsliding, and by bearing testimony against the same. And we hope the expectation of such, shall not be disappointed, but that the Lord will open to them a doore of hope for carrying on of his work, and making the lying spirit to passe out of that land.

And albeit many think no otherwise of the Covenant and work of Reformation, then as a mean to further their own ends; yet we are confident, that none who holds fast their integrity, have so learned Christ, but are careful to make conscience of the oath of God lying on them; And we are sure (whatever be the base thoughts and expressions of backsliders from the Covenant) it wants not many to owne it in these Kingdomes, who (being called thereto) would seal the same with their blood.

Although there were none in the one Kingdom who did adhere to the Covenant, yet thereby were not the other Kingdom nor any person in either of them absolved from the bond thereof, since in it we have not only sworn to God, but also covenanted with him. It is not the fallow of a man more that can absolve others from their duty, or from the duties therein contained, being in the same.



full, and the grounds of our tye thereunto moral, though others doe forget their duty, yet doth not their defection free us from that obligation which lyes upon us by the Covenant in our places and stations. And the Covenant being intended and entered into by these Kingdoms, as one of the best means of steadfastnesse, for guarding against declining times; It is strange to say that the back sliding of any should absolve us from the tye thereof, especially seeing our engagement therein is not only nationall, but also personall, every one having lifted hands swearing by himselfe, as it is evident by the manner of the Covenant.

From these and other important reasons, it may appear that all these Kingdomes joyning together to abolish that oath by law, yet could they not dispense therewith; Much lesse can any one of them, or any part in either of them doe the same. The dispensing with oathes hath hitherto been abhorred as Antichristian, and never practised and avowed by any, but by that man of sin; therefore those who take the same upon them, as they joyn with him in his sin, so must they expect to partake of his plagues.

As we shall ever (God willing) be mindfull of our duty to be faithfull that adhere to the Covenant in *England*, having it always in our hearts before the Lord, so we desire to be refreshed with their singlenesse and boldnesse in the cause of God, according to their places. This is the time of their triall, and the houre of temptation among them; blessed shall they be who shall be found following the Lamb, and shall not be ashamed of his testimony. We know in such dark houres, many will be carried away with the multitude, when the Lord will arise and make white; And we doubt not but many such will be found, whom the bold and clear preaching of Christ will convince. Much therefore lieth upon the Watch-men at this time, when the Trumpet may give a certain and distinct sound, calling every one, as those that must give account,



count; And blessed shall those servants be, who shall be found faithfull in their Lords house, distributing to his household what is meet for this season, and can say they are free of the blood of all men, having shewen them the whole Counsell of God, being in nothing terrified of the threats of their adversaries; And blessed and happy shall that people be, that walk in the light holden forth by them, and staye upon the Lord in this dark time, hearkning to the voyce of his servants, and walking in the light of his word, and not in the sparks of their owne kindlings, which will end in sorrow. How inexcusable will *England* be, so foulie revolted against so many faire testimonies, when the Lord Christ hath entred as Protestations to preserve his right, in these ends of the earth long since given unto him for his possession, and of late confirmed by Solemne Covenant. Christs right to these Kingdomes is surer then that he should be pleaded out of it by pretended liberty of Conscience, and his begun possession is more pretious to him, then to be satisfied with a dishonourable toleration. All that yet we have seen, doth not weaken our confidence of the Lords glorying the house of his glory in these lands, and of his sonnes taking unto him his great power, and raigning in the power and power of his Ordinances in this Island. His name is wonderfull, and so also are his works, we ought not therefore to square them according to our line, but leave them to him who hath the government laid upon his shoulder, all whose wayes are judgement, and whose ruling these Kingdomes had never yet reason to decline. It is good for us to be stedfast in our duty, and therein quietly to wait and hope for the salvation of God. The word of promise is sure, (and hath an appointed time) that he that will come shall come and will not tarry. There is none hath cause to distrust the Lords word to his people; It hath often to our experience been tryed in the fire, and hath ever come forth with a more glorious lustre. Let us therefore these that suffer in *England* cast away their confidence



